

# ***The African Development Bank Group***



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## **18th Session of the Committee of Director Generals (CoDGs),**

**Banjul, 9 – 12 December 2024**

Opening Statement

by

Dr. Babatunde Samson Omotosho  
Director, Statistics Department  
African Development Bank Group

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Your Excellency, the Vice President of the Republic of the Gambia,  
Mohammed B.S. Jallow,  
The Statistician General, Gambia Bureau of Statistics,  
The Acting Executive Director, STATAFRIC, African Union Commission,  
The Director, African Center for Statistics, Economic Commission for Africa,  
DGs of National Statistics Offices,  
Colleagues from Pan African Institutions and other Development Partners,  
Distinguished Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

## **Introduction**

1. On behalf of the African Development Bank Group, I would like to welcome you all, warmly, to the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices in Africa holding in the beautiful and hospitable nation of The Gambia. We are profoundly grateful to the Government and people of The Gambia for their warm hospitality. Mr Vice President, your presence in our midst this morning symbolizes the importance your government attaches to statistical development and innovation on the continent. I would also like to thank the Gambia Bureau of Statistics for hosting this event, and for their excellent coordination and logistical arrangements.
2. This 18<sup>th</sup> session provides an invaluable opportunity to address critical issues impacting the African Statistical System, including the progress on implementing our commitments under both continental and global development agendas. Chief among these are the vital tasks of providing data and evidence to monitor and evaluate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 and the aspirations of Agenda 2063 - "The Africa We Want."

## **Advancing Africa's Statistical Ecosystem**

3. In response to the growing demand for data on the continent, numerous statistical frameworks, strategies, and programs have been implemented at national, continental, and global levels. These initiatives are designed to strengthen the capacity and resilience of Africa's statistical ecosystem.
4. In terms of strategy, the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) has proven very useful in providing a unified framework for generating timely, reliable, and harmonized statistical information. SHaSA continues to empower the African Statistical System, enhancing its ability to respond effectively to developmental challenges.
5. However, about a decade into the implementation of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030, significant challenges remain. The limited availability of timely and high-quality statistics across many indicators continues to hinder our ability to effectively assess progress comprehensively. This calls for renewed efforts to enhance data collection, data accessibility, and data usage across the continent.

## **The Role of the CoDGs**

6. Today, we convene under a theme that resonates profoundly with the aspirations of our continent: *“Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century: Building Resilient Education Systems for Increased Access to Inclusive, Lifelong, Quality, and Relevant Learning in Africa.”* Thus, this session offers a platform to accelerate and scale up the implementation of existing frameworks and strategies, particularly those aligned with this year's theme.

7. The 21st century is defined by rapid technological advancements, evolving labor markets, and a growing emphasis on sustainability and equity. In this context, education must empower our citizens with the skills, knowledge, and mindset to thrive in a competitive and dynamic world. We must equip Africans to develop Africa.
8. Yet, the challenges we face are stark. Across the continent, millions of children remain out of school, education systems are underfunded, and disparities persist in access and outcomes based on gender, geography, and socio-economic status. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities of our education systems, underscoring the urgency to build resilience and foster inclusivity.
9. Dear Participants, this session presents an opportunity for us to valorize the power of data as a catalyst for driving transformational change in Africa's educational systems. Robust, timely, and disaggregated statistics are essential for diagnosing the gaps, designing effective interventions, and monitoring progress. As leaders and custodians of national data systems, we have a pivotal role to play in shaping Africa's educational future.
10. Our mandate transcends numbers. The statistics we produce represent real lives, real aspirations, and real potential. When we invest in data systems that illuminate the path toward inclusive and resilient education, we are investing in the future of our continent.

### **The African Development Bank's Commitment**

11. Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, The African Development Bank remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing Africa's statistical system. Through our Statistical Capacity Building program cycles, we have committed over 150 million US Dollars in grants over the past two decades

to address strategic and technical challenges confronting statistical development in Africa.

12. At the strategic level, the SCB program has been a cornerstone of our contributions to SHaSA and related coordination mechanisms. It has facilitated the design and implementation of National and Regional Strategies for the Development of Statistics, aligning these efforts with broader developmental priorities.
13. On the technical front, the program has supported enhancements in data collection, analysis, and dissemination across a broad spectrum of socio-economic sectors.
14. Recognizing the evolving data landscape, the Bank is also committed to driving innovation and modernization within Africa's statistical systems. Our Data Innovation Lab strategy exemplifies this commitment, addressing the opportunities and challenges of the contemporary data ecosystem to support Africa's vision for sustainable development.

### **Looking Ahead**

15. Ladies and gentlemen, let me highlight that the central theme of this session – building resilient education systems - is undoubtedly linked to the broader objective of creating “The Africa We Want.” The achievement of this vision requires our statistical systems to be innovative, adaptive, and future-focused. We must prioritize the development of digital solutions and innovative approaches to ensure the resilience and sustainability of our data ecosystems.
16. As we reflect on the critical role of statistics in shaping Africa's future, let us embrace the challenge of transformation and modernization. The

African Development Bank remains fully committed to working alongside national statistics offices, Pan-African institutions, and development partners to build a robust statistical foundation for sustainable growth and development.

17. Together, we can educate an African fit for the 21st century. Together, we can build the resilient education systems our continent so urgently needs. And Together, we can create the Africa We Want.

**Thank You for your attention.**